



State of Connecticut

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SB No. 910 - An Act Concerning Permanent Absentee Ballot Status

I wish to thank the co-chairs of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee for once again holding a public hearing on this bill.

Two years ago, a constituent contacted me to request legislation that would require absentee ballots to be automatically mailed to voters who have permanent disabilities. She told me she must complete a separate application for each election, primary and referendum in order to receive an absentee ballot. She wrote that she considers this situation to be a form of discrimination since people who are able to go to the polls don't have to fill out or sign anything every time they want to vote. She is permanently disabled, and therefore will always require an absentee ballot.

I agreed with her that having to apply for an absentee ballot for every election seems to present an added hardship for someone who is going to require the absentee option for all future elections. It is reasonable and just that an automatic mailing system for absentee ballots be established for permanently disabled voters. Therefore I proposed bill 6004 in 2007 to remove the obstacles from the procedures surrounding absentee voting for those who are permanently disabled. That bill was referred to the Government Administrations and Elections Committee and then later included in a section of 1312. We again tried to do this in 2008 through SB 445 and 444.

Well – we hope that the third time is a charm! This year, I offer this testimony in support of SB 910. This legislation would eliminate the need for the permanently disabled to make multiple trips to their town hall to request forms for each election, sometimes more than one election in a year, and thus allow them to take part comfortably in a most important civic privilege and responsibility.

I greatly appreciate your consideration, and I am willing to work with you to pass this bill. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.